



CHAPTER XVIII

THE PICTURE.

"Excellent, excellent!" was Maxey's admiring cry. Dr. Lamar adjusted his eyeglass to have a better look at it. The chandelier blazed at its fullest in the front parlor. The picture was placed on an easel in the projecting window space, and all four stood back a little way to behold it. Miss Maxey's arm was about Annette's waist, and she expressed the sentiment the work had awakened in her by an occasional admiring sneeze. Maxey was simply radiant. Dr. Lamar was impressed, but puzzled. Mrs. Maxey appeared both pleased and frightened by the warmth of the reception of her latest attempt.

It was a life size sketch in crayon of a strong and characteristic face, somewhat shadowy and ghostlike in its effect, but so bold and striking in conception and execution that it commanded and held the attention.

"I don't know so much about the technique of art as I ought," commented Dr. Lamar, "but it strikes me that you have handled your subject remarkably well, Mrs. Maxey. Notwithstanding the curious, vague and misty atmosphere which you have managed to throw about it, the picture impresses you as a reality."

"That's it exactly!" exclaimed Maxey. "That is just the soul of true art. It is a recreation of nature. I claim that this is a masterpiece. I shall take it to the studio tomorrow and hang it up in a conspicuous place."

Mrs. Maxey started. "Oh, no! Don't do that, please."

"Why not, I should like to know?" "Because—I would rather you did not."

Dr. Lamar turned from a contemplation of the picture to a wondering scrutiny of the young wife's features. There was an unmistakable scared look in her face.

"Why, you silly little goose!" exclaimed Maxey, with a laugh. "What are you afraid of?"

"Oh, I'm not afraid! Only I would rather not have this picture put up in a public place. It is better to wait until I have done something more worthy."

"Nonsense," said Maxey. "This is one of your attacks of modesty. You will think better of it in the morning."

"And this is nobody's face?" questioned Lamar gravely. His eyes were still fixed on the young wife's features.

"A fancy sketch, simply," returned Maxey. "That is why I think so highly of it. I call it remarkable."

"It is remarkable," agreed Lamar. "Where did you get the idea, Mrs. Maxey?"

The scared look on her face deepened, but she forced an uneasy laugh and replied: "What a question! How does anybody get an original idea?"

"Pure originality is a delusion," said the philosophic physician. "We could trace the most startling innovations if we had the means at hand. But in this case you must be able to tell when you first saw this face which you have put upon the canvas. Did you sit down to sketch with any definite idea in mind, or did it come to you as you were drawing it?"

"Oh, the face was in my mind before I thought of sketching it."

"When did you first become aware of its being in your mind?"

"How ridiculous!" Mrs. Maxey again laughed nervously. Dr. Lamar's steady gaze had confused her. Her glance was averted. Her whole appearance indicated that this persistent questioning was extremely distasteful to her.

Maxey and his sister naturally attributed all this wholly to her natural shyness.

"What are you up to now, Eustace?" laughed Maxey. "Some new metaphysical theory, I suppose. Haven't you done experimenting on my wife yet?"

Whatever his theory was, or however great his desire for experiment, Dr. Lamar kept it to himself. He voluntarily changed the subject by reminding them that Miss Maxey had promised to sing.

They went into the back room to gather around the piano, leaving the portrait under the full glare of the gaslight.

Later in the evening the door softly opened, and Lamar came in. He wanted to see this strange picture alone and undisturbed. He stood back, looking at it. In that steady light the ghostlike face seemed to float as through a misty space.

The ghostlike face seemed to float. What was it that made it so remarkable? For it was a remarkable face. The features were stern and grim, fixed and full of hard lines. It was not that. It was the face of a man of strong character. It was the embodiment of relentlessness and determination. It was not that. It spoke volumes for the mental strength, but never a word for tenderness or veneration. It was an utterly unscrupulous face. It was not that. The eyes glared. The lips parted as if the breath came too quickly for the nostrils alone.

Ah, that was it! The expression! No man ever sat for his portrait with his

features cast in a mold such as this. This made the novelty and the strangeness. It was such a look as the human face sometimes in great emergencies, in a time of high pulse and excitement, wears for a fleeting instant. Nowhere outside a madhouse could it become fixed and changeless.

Yes, that was it indeed. The perpetuation of the expression of a moment, like the work of instantaneous photography, with all the latent power and sense of breathlessness that such a fact involves.

The brows were contracted into a deep scowl. The thin lips seemed almost to quiver, and with its staring eyes and changeless look in the glare of the gaslight this fearful countenance seemed to float on through space.

The sound of music came from the other room. Mrs. Maxey was singing the "Ave Maria."

Dr. Lamar felt himself safe from interruption. An odd fancy, suggested perhaps by the peculiar character of the subject, came to him. He reached up and turned off the gas jets one by one until but a single light remained. He reached this until it was the feeblest spark and stepped back to see the effect.

There was a fire in the open grate. The light of the coals flickered and fell, and the room was full of shadows. But the face! Truly the lips quivered! And the eyes! Did they not move? The scowl! Does it not deepen? Surely this cannot be water through which it looks! But a moment ago it was space. Now it seems as if the tide were flowing—the steady and relentless tide—and as it flows its ceaseless motion causes the soft flesh to tremble. The eyes seem to grow hollow, to fade away, leaving untenant cavities, and as this happens the quivering lips break into a mocking leer. A fierce breath from the unseen river rises to rap with a hollow rattle at the windows. The sound breaks the spell.

Horried at his own sensations, Lamar turned and hurried from the room. When Dr. Lamar rejoined the party in the next room, he found Mrs. Maxey in tears.

"Did you notice how affected she was?" Ellen asked him in an undertone. "By what?"

"By the singing of Schubert's 'Ave Maria.' Don't you remember, it was the song that made her faint in the old days? I have never sung it since. Somehow I thought of it tonight, and immediately we found her crying. And it seems it was something her mother used to sing."

"Ah! Dr. Bently was right then. It was a reminiscence."

There was a knock at the door. Maxey answered it. He closed the entrance to the rear chamber after him and turned up the gas in the vestibule before he opened it to his visitor.

He was seized with a sudden trembling at the knees when he saw who the visitor was. Paler, ghastlier, more funeral than ever, the melancholy Dye, whose woebegone hat and threadbare coat exhibited a still deeper shade of desolation, stood upon the threshold.

"You again?" "Sir, again."

"In spite of all that I told you?" "Sir, I have borne your instructions well in mind. I have forgotten nothing. It remains for you to say whether you will admit me or no."

Mr. Dye did not look at Maxey when he addressed him. In truth, he did not seem to have energy or spirit enough left to raise his head, and he certainly did not appear at all anxious to be invited into the room.

The growing conviction that this man was not the prime mover, but only the instrument in the hands of a more powerful personage who kept himself always in the background, leaped to a mad mature stage in the artist's mind.

"Admit you!" he exclaimed, suppressing the tendency to loudness in his tones for fear of reaching the ears in the adjoining chamber. "That I shall do most certainly, since you have come. Walk in, Mr. Dye, and state your business, and let us see if we cannot come to something approaching a mutual understanding. That is a point which we have too long been dodging about, Mr. Dye, and I have a very distinct idea that it would be well for us to reach it tonight."

The somber man raised a look of mild inquiry to the artist's face, said simply, "As you will," and passed into the parlor.

Maxey closed and locked the door and turned on two of the gas jets.

Then he noticed that Mr. Dye was trembling. It was a chilly evening, and it occurred to him that the threadbare coat could not be very warm.

"You are cold, man," he said. "Draw up here by the fire."

He placed a chair as he spoke in front of the open grate. Mr. Dye bowed gravely.

"Sir, I thank you."

He had only looked at Maxey himself. He sat down with his back to the picture and began at once to warm his hands over the coals. He did not wait for the artist to question him, but immediately, with his most exalted air, began:

"Sir, you are doubtless exceedingly surprised and, may I venture to add, not inconsiderably annoyed by my reappearance in this house. When I went away from here, sir, you adjured me, upon pain of personal injury, never, except upon certain conditions, to appear in your presence again. But at the risk of that personal injury I have once more, and for the last time, come. Upon a former occasion I might have feared you; but, strange and paradoxical as it may seem, now that I am much weaker and less capable of self defense I no longer dread the violence of your resentment."

"Well," said Maxey impatiently as he paused, "have you come here to challenge me? If not, please come to the point."

"That is the effect of the whisky. As long as money remains to me to purchase oblivion I do not care for luck or the devil. I am one of those unengaged, solitary individuals who retire with a jug into an obscure place, lock the door and hide the key from myself. After I have become a maniac, a fool and an inanimate brute by turns I emerge again into the light, more emaciated, more broken down, one step nearer the much to be desired rest that comes at the end for us all. A cheerful life, sir, is it not?"

He turned his faded blue eyes with the bloodshot corners toward the startled artist, who vomited him no reply, and continued:

"Sir, you are saying to yourself: 'Is this man seeking to excite my sympathy, or what is his object? What possible interest does he think I can have in his grotesque narrative?' Very little, sir, indeed. Only it will afford some excuse for me perhaps for the performance of the most heartless and despicable act of my whole accursed existence."

Mr. Dye uttered the last words savagely and vehemently. His speech indeed sounded so much like the mutterings of a broken intellect that Maxey involuntarily drew back a pace or two.

Mr. Dye did not heed him. He went on: "You behold in me, Mr. Maxey, a man who believes in a remorseless destiny—a destiny which may be as obnoxious to the victim as a bed of torture, as plain before him as the noonday sun, and which still he cannot escape. He sees the little steps which lead to the great end in the distance presenting themselves one after the other before him, and he knows that if he fails to take any one of them the whole end would be changed, but still he never fails to take them. Sir, that is my life—my religion, if you will. And so I am here, impelled by the same inexorable fate which has pursued me from the first, and which will pursue me to the close, to bring a shame and an unhappiness into the midst of joy."

"Well, sir, what is it? I am quite prepared by this time for anything, Mr. Dye. I do not fear anything you can say."

"Sir, you are too confident of that. When I last came, you asked me for proofs of the shameful story that I told you then. I have brought them."

There was utter silence, and then Maxey advanced a step and said in a quiet voice: "Well, sir, I am waiting for you."

Mr. Dye did not look up. He put his trembling hand solemnly into the breast of the threadbare coat and drew forth a little package of paper. Maxey took it and saw that it consisted of two documents of a legal aspect, which were variously superscribed, "Affidavit of George Stephenson" and "Affidavit of Mary Stephenson."

Maxey compressed his lips and looked no further.

"Ah," murmured the wretched Dye, "if you only knew what I have purchased by placing these accursed papers in your hand, you would not think of me hereafter with so much bitterness."

"Mr. Dye," said Maxey suddenly, "the time to drop this mask of yours is fully ripe."

The somber man half turned in his chair.

"Sir, I fail to understand you."

"No? Suppose that I were to tell you that I know who sent you here?"

The words had a marked effect on Mr. Dye. He instantly completed that which the former question had caused him to begin and turned wholly about in his chair, facing the artist with an ash countenance. As he did so his eye fell upon the picture.

Maxey noticed his sudden silence, though he imperfectly understood the cause.

Mr. Dye sat in his chair without motion, his faded eyes wide open, looking intently at the portrait on the easel.

There would have been complete silence in the room but for the ticking of the clock on the mantel, the escape of the burning gas, the distant sound of voices in the rear chamber.

Then Mr. Dye arose, steadying himself on the chair back with his shaking hand—arose, and turning his eyes on Maxey held out his free arm in a questioning way toward the easel.

"What is the matter? Are you ill? I don't understand you. That is a picture my wife sketched."

A terrible trembling came upon every portion of the somber man's frame. He cried out in a hoarse voice: "The Jew's face! The Jew's face!"

There was a rush like the breath of unseen wings from over the darkened window. The ghostly hand rapped at the window, and Mr. Dye fell down upon the floor.

"Sir, you must pardon me, but I cannot be abrupt. Before I come to the point I want to prepare you for what I am going to say by recalling, perhaps, I told you, on a former occasion that I was a contemptible rascal. Bearing that in mind, my business here tonight will not very much surprise you. Lost to honor and self respect and to every sentiment which makes a man a man, you will not be astonished when I tell you what I have come to tell. If, when I have told it, you wish to throw me in the street and break every bone in my worthless body, I shall not resist you. In fact, I could not if I would. I am too weak. Observe, for instance, that."

He extended toward Maxey one of his lean and sawn hands. It shook like a leaf.

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The Curse of Humanity. Frau Schlemmiller (standing with her second husband at the grave of her first)—Yes, here he lies, the brave warrior. You would certainly not be my husband today if my dear John had not died the death of a hero on the battlefield.

Herr Schlemmiller (nervously)—Yes, war is the curse of humanity.—Zeitspiegel.

Ragmuffin, Ragmuffin. It was first met with in "Piers Plowman" and meant "one of the demons of hell." In "Piers Plowman" they also met with "ragman"—made from "rag man"—meaning "the devil." "Rag man's roll," of Scotch origin, came into use as a slang term for a lying document or "rigmarole."—Academy.

Weber was very temperate in his habits, but insisted on drinking three glasses of wine and no more every day with his dinner.

Had No Other Chance. Readley—Why do you smoke continually from morning until night? Woodley—It's the only time I get a sleep from night till morning.—London Tit-Bits.

THE GRAPEVINE SWING.

Bilthely whistling, with agile swing, Leaps the farmer's boy to the grapevine swing. To and fro, high and low, Up where the winds the branches blow, Flying down to lightly pass, Where bare feet ripple the blue eyed grass. Up again in the sunshine free, Back in the shade of the maple tree, Spurning the ground with supple foot, At the well worn spot at the maple's root. Higher, the branches strike his breast, There are three blue eyes in the robin's nest Drooping, drooping, swiftly down, With a flying glimpse of the distant town, Back and forth in the noontide glow, Swinging slower and still more slow, Idly rocking in a pined gloom, To a tremulous pause in the vine's perfume. Springing at length where the grasses yield, He follows the pain to the housekeeping. —Mary L. Paine in Good Housekeeping.

ACID FOR MAKING SUGAR.

A Curious Process Which Has Met With Some Success In France.

A very novel method of making sugar has been patented in France by M. Pellegrini. Sugar is chemically a compound of carbon, oxygen and hydrogen in such proportions that if carbonic acid, water and certain kinds of illuminating gas could be persuaded to unite in the proper quantities the composition of sugar would be exactly imitated. Hitherto no one has been able to make sugar by mixing water with two kinds of gas, but M. Pellegrini claims to have succeeded. The apparatus he uses consists of a large block of pumice stone, cleansed by soaking first in sulphuric acid and then in water, which is set in an iron box plated with nickel inside. The length of the box is three times that of the pumice stone block, which is tightly fitted in the middle, and pipes are arranged to convey the ingredients to the empty ends of the box, as required. Two of them enter from the sides and serve to bring carbonic acid and hydrocarbon gas, while another pipe from above branches so as to reach both empty portions of the box and conveys steam. All the pipes are fitted with valve and pressure gauges.

Another pipe at the bottom of the box serves as an outlet. At first this pipe is closed, as is also the steam pipe from above, and carbonic acid is forced into one end of the box, while ethylene gas is forced into the other under equal pressure and in equal volumes. A few minutes later the steam valve above is opened and the steam forced in under the same pressure. As the gases unite the pressure falls, so that the supply of each must be kept constant. At the end of half an hour the supply of gas is shut off, the outlet pipe is opened, and one of the chambers is found to be filled with sirup containing 25 per cent of sugar.

The sirup is drawn off for refining, and as soon as the apparatus is cool it is ready for a fresh charge. The ethylene gas can be obtained by roasting rosin or grease, but M. Pellegrini's patent covers other hydrocarbons, such as petroleum products. The explanation is that the three gases are condensed in the pores of the pumice stone and there unite.—American Architect.

A Living From Ten Acres. A Good Suggestion.

ROCHESTER, N. Y.—John Davies of this city, took a severe cold and suffered pain through the back and kidneys. His physician pronounced his case grave, and failed to help him. Dr. David Kennedy's Favorite Remedy was recommended, and after taking two bottles he considered himself cured. It cures rheumatism and neuralgia also.

Antiquity of Smoking. In the mortar of the tower of Kirkstall abbey, which fell in the year 1779, Whitaker mentions that several little "smoking pipes" were found, showing that the smoking of some herb or other was in use in England 400 years before tobacco was introduced. Dr. Petrie mentions that pipes of bronze for smoking are often found in ancient Irish tumuli. In the monument of Donogh O'Brien, king of Thomond, who was killed A. D. 1287 and interred in the abbey of Corcomroe, County Clare, he is represented with a short pipe, or du-deen, in his mouth.

It may be observed that in some very ancient coal workings, which were found under Lambton castle some 30 years ago, some of these very old smoking pipes were found, and a generation or two ago not far from Lambton very poor old folks might often be seen smoking the common white flowered yarrow, a herb frequently found in country churchyards.—Newcastle Chronicle.

Specimen Cases. S. H. Clifford, New Cassel, Wis., was troubled with neuralgia and rheumatism, his stomach was disordered, his liver was affected to an alarming degree, appetite fell away, and he was terribly reduced in flesh and strength. Three bottles of Electric Bitters cured him.

Edward Shepherd, Harrisburg, Ill., had a running sore on his leg of eight years' standing. Used three bottles of Electric Bitters and seven boxes of Bucklen's Arnica Salve, and his leg is sound and well. John Speaker, Catawba, O., had five large fever sores on his leg, doctors said he was incurable. One bottle Electric Bitters and one box Bucklen's Arnica Salve cured him entirely. Sold by D. J. Humphrey.

Hard to Please. Mrs. Henpecker is one of those wives there is no pleasing. On the return of her husband from the city last week she greeted him thusly: "Oh, Adolphus," she exclaimed, "how short you have had your hair cut!"

"But my dear Angelina," replied Mr. H. meekly, "I haven't had my hair cut at all."

"Then it is high time you had," returned Mrs. H. severely.—Leeds (England) Mercury.

A Household Treasure. D. W. Fuller, of Canajoharie, N. Y., says that he always keeps Dr. King's New Discovery in the house and his family has always found the very best results follow its use; that he would not be without it, if procurable. G. A. Dykeman, Druggist, Catskill, N. Y., says that Dr. King's New Discovery is undoubtedly the best Cough remedy; that he has used it in his family for eight years, and it has never failed to do all that is claimed for it. Why not try a remedy so long tried and tested. Trial bottles free at D. J. Humphrey's Drug Store. Regular size 50c. and \$1.00.

Had No Other Chance. Readley—Why do you smoke continually from morning until night? Woodley—It's the only time I get a sleep from night till morning.—London Tit-Bits.

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Nearly Had Baby Spasms.

NAPOLEON, O., June 7, 1894.—Hand Medicine Co.—My baby at three months old had colic so badly we feared spasms. My husband ran to the doctor for "soothing syrup." Our physician was present when he called for it and advised him to try Dr. Hand's Colic Cure. We did so. We have used nearly three